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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 9351

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IT, PINT
SUBJECT: BARTOLOMEI CONVERSATION REGARDING ITALIAN DEVELOPMENTS

IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND POLIICAL COUNSELOR, SENATOR BARTOLOMEI, HEAD OF THE DC GROUP IN THE SENATE, MADE A NUMBER OF INTERESTING POINTS:

1. DC LEADERSHIP: NO BASIC CHANGES IN THE DC LEADERSHIP ARE LIKELY TO BE MADE BEFORE THE ELCTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE DC CONGRESS NEXT SPRING (THIS COMES FROM A MAN WHO VERY MUCH WANTS CHANGES IN THE ZACCAGNINI SECRETARIAT).

2. DC-PCI RELATIONS: THE BEHAVIOR OF THE DC DURING THE NEXT 8-12 MONTHS IS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER IT WILL THROW AWAY THE POLITICAL ADVANTAGE THAT THE RECENT LOCAL ELECTIONS SHOW IT NOW HAS. THE DC MUST NOT ONLY WORK AT GOOD GOVERNMENT AND RENEWAL OF THE PARTY, IT MUST KEEP ITSELF DISTINCT FROM THE PCI. THE MORO-ANDREOTTI-ZACCAGNINI LINE OF CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE PCI IS NOT A WINNER.

3. LOCAL ELECTIONS: THE MOST IMPORTANT RESULT OF THE RECENT ELECTIONS WAS THE FACT THAT THE ELECTORATE DID NOT MOVE TOWARD THE EXTREMES OF THE RIGHT AND LEFT BUT REINFORCED THE CENTER AND IN SO DOING GAVE THE COMMUNISTS THE FIRST MAJOR
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DEFEAT THEY HAVE HAD IN YEARS. TERRORISM WAS OBVIOUSLY A MAJOR FACTOR IN THE ELECTIONS AND THE ELECTORATE'S UNDERSTANDING THAT TERRORISM IS RED CLEARLY COST THE PCI A LOT OF VOITES. THE FRENCH ELECTIONS ALSO HAD A MARGINAL INFLUENCE. DISILLU-SIONMENT WITH THE PCI'S PERFORMANCE IN LOCAL OFFICES WAS ALSO A FACTOR, ALTHOUGH A MINOR ONE. THE ELECTORAL RESULTS WILL ACCENTUATE THE STRAINS WITHIN THE PCI, IN THE SAME WAY THAT

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THE BRIGATE ROSSE'S ACTIONS ARE DOING. WHILE THE DIFFERENCES
ARE NOT EASY FOR AN OUTSIDE OBSERVER TO SEE, THERE ARE CLEAR
DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE PCI, FROM TOP TO BOTTOM, BETWEEN THOSE
WHO BELIEVE IN REVOLUTION AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN GRADUALISM
THROUGH DEMOCRATIC MEANS. THE STRAINS WITHIN THE PCI ARE NOT
LIKELY TO PRODUCE ANY DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE
BUT THE POSSIBILITY CANNOT BE EXCLUDED.

4. THE "WHITE SEMESTER": DURING THE NEXT EIGHT MONTHS, UNTIL
THE NEW PRESIDENT IS ELECTED, THE PRESENT GOVERNING ARRANGEMENT
WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE UNCHANGED IN THE ABSENCE OF SOME DRAMATIC
DEVELOPMENT WITH NEW TERRORISM BEING THE MOST LIKELY. THERE
WILL BE MANY IN THE PCI WHO WILL BE TEMPTED DURING THE 6-MONTH
PERIOD, WHEN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS ARE NOT POSSIBLE, TO
ATTEMPT TO FORCE THE PCI'S WAY INTO THE GOVERNMENT. SHOULD
THEY DO SO, THE DC WOULD HOLD FIRM BUT THE RESULT WOULD BE A
DC CARETAKER GOVERNMENT FOR A PERIOD OF MONTHS AT A TIME OF
ECONOMIC AND LAW AND ORDER CRISES. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD
BE DANGEROUS.

5. REPLACEMENT FOR MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR COSSIGA: DC
CHAMBER GROUP LEADER PICCOLI HAS SAID NO TO THE JOB WHICH IS
JUST AS WELL. IF PICCOLI TOOK THE JOB THE DC SECRETARIAT
WOULD ATTEMPT TO REPLACE HIM WITH GALLONI. PICCOLI IS A MAN
OF THE CENTER-RIGHT WHILE GALLONI IS A MAN OF THE DC'S LEFT
AND GALLONI'S PRESENCE IN HE CHAMBER AS DC GROUP LEADER WOULD
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CAUSE SUBSTANTIAL INTERNAL FRICTION WITHIN THE DC GROUP.
BARTOLOMEI SAID THAT, WHILE HIS CANDIDACY HAD BEEN MENTIONED,
HE BELIEVES THAT THE PCI'S OPPOSITION WOULD BE TOO STRONG FOR
HIS CANDIDACY TO HAVE ANY REAL CHANCE OF SUCCESS.GARDNER

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